

Tam O'Shanter Dancers

This month we bring you news and greetings from another Canadian group – the Tam O'Shanter Dancers, with some photos which should get us looking forward to the Scottish Summer – well either that or be heartily jealous – and some photos of this years

Burns Supper.

Approximately thirty years ago a demonstration group named The Heather Belles was formed in White Rock just south of Vancouver, Canada.

The Heather Belles demonstration group was selected to dance at Expo '86 in Vancouver. Accompanied by Peter and Murray Lyon on the bagpipes The Heather Belles danced on four occasions at Expo '86 and a special dance named "The Call of the Pipers" was written by teacher and leader Maureen Lyon.

When several men joined the group, it was renamed "The Tam O'Shanter Dancers". The goal of The Tam O'Shanter Dancers is to promote Scottish Country Dancing by presenting demonstrations at local and international social and cultural events.



They perform regularly in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, but have also performed at international events.

The Tam O'Shanter Dancers have also visited Scotland. As ambassadors from Canada, they brought with them greetings from the Mayors of Surrey and White Rock. The Lord Provost of Edinburgh welcomed the dancers at an official "Afternoon Tea".

On another occasion they visited Scotland and were welcomed at several civic lunches and evening functions in Kilmarnock, Ayr and Dumfries.

On their third trip to Scotland the Tams were the international guests at the Caledonian Canal Ceilidh. They performed at the Inverness Highland Games, Glenfiddich Distillery, Visitor Centre at The Millennium Wheel in Falkirk, the Drumkinnon Visitor Centre at Loch Lomond and at a Kidney Transplant Fundraiser at the Lord Provost's home in Edinburgh.

Last year they visited Hawaii and performed at the Hawaiian Highland Games, as the photos show. (If it wasn't for the shorts worn by the spectators, it could almost be photos of Highland Games in Scotland!)



At this year's Burns Supper, as can be seen on some of the photos, a picture frame 8 feet tall X 4 feet wide, was made by two of the dance members.

It was placed in a corner location throughout the initial part of Burns Night and, after dinner, the lights dimmed and a spotlight focussed upon its place. Just prior to this, however, the picture in the frame had been removed and instead Robert Burns came alive before the audience to humorously relate some of his life's experiences interspersed with a couple of his songs (*The De'il's Awa* and *Scots Wha Hae*) sung by two different singers.

Three dances were performed by The Tam O'Shanter Dancers (*The Exciseman*, *The Red Red Rose* and their own "Banshee Frolic"). Even the Toast to the Lassies was given during this segment of our programme.

Robert Burns was portrayed by one of the dancers and the picture of Burns was actually their own Burns dressed in a period costume they made for him. The actual set-up was quite remarkable as, at a glance, one might think it really was Burns in the picture, but it was even more stunning when he came alive before the audience's eyes.



John Lang, Laurie Lang, Jack Kergan, April Phillips, Cheryl Jorgensen, Jim Nicol, Linda Forman, Stella Cleave, Ed Wigmore, Maureen Lyon, Bruce Power, Lucretia Feedham, Paul Lowe, Hugh Aspinall, Janice Lowe, Jean Mullard

The Tam O'Shanter Dancers

